

BARTHOLOMEW, STORMBRINGER

One HE BRINGS A STORM

“He brings a storm and dies. Then we have the dawn again; and man lives and; and he comes again and doesn’t die.”

Bartholomew waited. He waited a long time. The single eon it takes for an angel to learn to cry. That is a long time, it is not geological time, but it is long. Then he descended; he did not land, he descended; he was able to walk and use gravity. Walking on the pavement, on the sidewalks, mixing with teeming humanity. And it was immediate; it was the natural and automatic start of what an earthly being will do, without regard for being coiled up by a mortal noose or being resurrected by another and who by comparison finds it infinitely difficult to know himself.

The first thing: he turns in a circle to look around, he really circles: again, teeming humanity. “It really is easier for a man to resurrect another than it is for him to know himself,” he says, remembering the lesson, feeling the logic of the multitude with the arithmetic of his aural and corporeal presence in it; he said it to the strength and degree of approximating a mineral element in a rock formation huddled under the sea with a school of ten thousand fish swirling and oxygenating in the over-wash of the waves on the tidal rocks: multitudes. To work, to go to friends’, to search for a bite to eat.

He carried an empty notebook. It started to rain lightly. The feathery drops hit the book: the sound of light rain falling on parchment: dip, dip, dip-itty-dip (a leaf up-ends the fall), dip-dip. Intoxicated by it, Bartholomew dropped his eyes and looked at the damp grey water-marks newly birthed on the cover, like pen-marks on a dune. “Rain on parchment is a good affair,” he said. It somehow seemed sufficient to him. Ah, but all was sufficient, wasn’t it? It was a mildly enacted self-scolding, something penitent and real and therefore something he had grown used to, as one does.

Intoxicated by the rain on the paper, he had a sudden urge to know the time. He tried to stop someone, then saw a plain thirty-something lady standing at a corner. He approached her, and said, “I’m so sorry, but I don’t know what time it is.” He framed it as an assertion, like a child might. But was it not also adaptive, an older covenant in the man? The lady seemed startled, then she lifted her arm to look at her watch. “Why, it’s 11:30,” she said, looking directly into

his eyes. "That would be morning, wouldn't it? I'm sorry, it's just that I really don't know," he inquired. "Well, you're right. It is indeed morning," the plain and now more pretty lady said. This prettier being took a light breath then said, "If you really want to know, it will be afternoon in one half of an our." She was very clear about it.

Bartholomew was excited by this, it seemed that he could ask this lady what he wanted to. "Aha yes! That's how we count the cusps off!" The plain lady was ready to answer this; her astonishment had not yet cast itself over her mind: as tides do corral reefs, the reef of her mind, the un-servant, the kind quill in an old master's hand but she was not a marionette. So she said, "That's right. A very interesting way to put it," she quipped dryly, softly fond, soft fondness; the dryness of the quip was desperately attractive to him; he sighed, and his groin hurt for a moment.

The plain pretty lady understood his idiomatic speech, it seemed. And she had humor, dry but sweet, as younger old maids do sometimes: part of the dryness was her defensive caution, which was a part of her character, but the other part of it was real: there was a plentiful kernel of arduous mirth behind it, waiting, impatient like a first kiss: a spark in her plain demeanor, o, but a meteor ready to break through the atmosphere; a quiet, giggling orgasm!

There was a silence. It was common for Bartholomew, these silences. So the lady said, "It's at that time that we usually eat." She saw his absent stare: "Lunch," she said: "The mid-day meal." She emphasized her speech with psychological diacritics; Bartholomew's left eyebrow lifted in curiosity, the other expressive mechanisms of his human face following in creases and lines and the unique stretches of curvature over the cavities of his frontal skull. Then strangely again came the absence in his eyes, his face an open book, like an amazed child waiting in anticipation of the adult's words and actions, like there might be candy in the deal; or like an autistic, like there might be anything, where anything is utterly exceptional and to be desired as long as it is given, proffered: "We have three meal-times," she said. "Breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Traditionally speaking, anyway; if not universal, then, for the most part—" she stopped for a moment, cutting herself off, now finally astonished: she had just used the word 'universal' in a discussion about meals, the luminal waters surging over her long abandoned, frail, and unmarried/one-time deflowered pools and reefs, flooding them with a strange mercy, a mercy as liquid and powerful as sperm; she cut off that flow immediately though: too late for what had already taken place, but in time to think: thinking that there was a fundamental need for expedience with this person, coming to her rampant and untapped potential for extreme understanding, struggling with it, to conquer it, an 'it' that was present for the first time in her life; so she continued the sentence: "—for the most part, we have three, three meals." It was good fare.

She was nervous but not nervous. She was in a state of soul and mind. And there was again a silence. She started to count inside. She wondered in a momentary flight of her thoughts why she was not walking away, then cut the thought off. Finally Bartholomew spoke up. "I remember," he said: "It was like that in

the old colonial ruin and the garden. Piers did most of the meal preparations. Evan liked to be served, but gave instructions to Piers when Piers was behaving stupidly or couldn't remember how Evan, or Evan thought someone else, liked it prepared. Jude usually helped Piers, as a kind of unwilling but also willing assistant, but he could equally side with Evan, if you could call it that really, and find a pretext there to make fun of Piers and tease him with what amounted to annoyed aggression, on Jude's part. Piers never minded it; he enjoyed it, he liked to get a rile out of Jude (it always came out like that in the end, the other way around from how Jude had aimed it), it gratified him and he knew that Jude would eventually succumb to his (Piers') blissful indifference to his (Jude's) proddings."

The plain lady knew she was in the presence of a madman or of a person suffering from some sort of brain lesion. She asked, calming herself, learning as she went along, on the fly, circumscribed by necessity's inventions: "And what did you do?" "I watched," said Bartholomew. "Always?" the plain lady asked, her nerves settling for reasons she could not define. "Almost always," said Bartholomew.

He went quiet then. The two of them were still standing at the corner, cars rushed by, a man hailed: "Taxi!" Neither of them moved their heads. She watched Bartholomew, then with consideration and a bit of calculated judgment as to the content, decided to break the silence with another offering: "I'm going for lunch, and I will get a sandwich." She specified this very adroitly, on purpose. "Would you like to get a sandwich for your mid-day meal? It's time for that now. You can come with me if you like. I am going anyway." It just all came out of her. She spoke to him not like he might be a child, but like he might have been one at one time.

Bartholomew nodded and looked at her. Then he quickly moved and jugged himself out with long strides to be the first to cross the street. With a little amazement she followed him and when she caught up to him they walked a few blocks together, in silence, concentrated on their walking, to a little quiet diner, where the teeming multitudes had long tapered away and people walked as recognizable individuals with recognizable and unique tasks, like going to a liquor store or taking a run, an old man walking his dog, which was still unusual in this part of town: strange, to see an old man walking his dog here.

"Two pastrami sandwiches please," the pretty lady said. "No onions. And two bags of chips, and two 7-ups," she said to the man behind the counter. She knew this was the easiest way: just to do it. The man behind the counter worked on the sandwiches while they waited. Neither of them spoke. The man looked up at them with a twist in his brow as if he were making a reconnaissance effort with the aim of possibly shooting more interventionist stares. The plain pretty lady noticed this and quickly and aggressively looked him straight in the eye. She was very fierce, experiencing after long years the intoxicating compression of riding a steep learning curve and not falling off. The man making the sandwiches felt defeated and sullenly then unconsciously went back to preparing the sandwiches, the chips, and the drinks. He placed them on the counter and the

lady side-stepped away from Bartholomew to the cash register. Bartholomew saw his opportunity and lunged forward and stretched his arms and took the sandwiches, chips, and drinks over to a table where he placed it all smack dab in the middle of it. The lady came over to the table and sat down and pretended to marvel a little at the accomplishment while not feigning anything. "I got them for us," Bartholomew said, happily noticing her reactions, having hoped that they would be like that. "Then I brought them over here," he continued, avid, smiling. "I noticed," she replied. "I knew you had to settle an account with the man, so I thought, 'I'll get these myself for the both of us,'" he said. "And so you did," she said, smiling, breathing a little bit, but smiling. "Yes," he said, as he sat himself down.

Ruminoid the Watcher sat at another eating table, a few seats down from the girl and Bartholomew. He had used the waitress instead of a counter order. He watched the two of them while he sipped on his Coke; he was getting to the point where he'd have to start slurping on it with his extra-long straw. He himself felt dreamy today: 'It's the sun,' he thought. He was always careful about his judgments. It was part of how he was made, of how he was: He felt that this girl might be just the right thing for Bartholomew right now, just what the doctor ordered; at least at this juncture. That was that for him; like a master detective, once concluding and verifying a hunch as a fact, he quickly moved on: Content that the situation was under control and having apprehended for himself the aura and the nature of it, he looked over and up at the waitress with a friendly expression of inquisitive desire, more desire and more inquisitiveness than the waitress appreciated; he was quite happy with himself about it, and in general; he felt good today. He asked for the check, please. She turned away from him with an aggressive but provocative swing of her hips, and he took a last drag on his straw, slurping the sweet icy brown liquid into his mouth, jostling it under his tongue. Then he left money with a nice but unexaggerated tip billeted under the ash-tray: He loved this element, he always had. He'd have to tease Cosmo about it. Cosmo would wince and quietly give up on him and just ask for the progress.

Two THE OLEANDER

"This is where the garden was; it's here. The Oleander. Still here. Next to this hydrant."

"It was here?" she asked. "In this vacant lot?" He had gone over it with her while they walked from the diner to the spot. She had not been incredulous, she had been again stupefied, the waters washing over the reefs of her mind. "Yes," he said. "It was right here." "Where is everything else?" she said, concerned,

but about what she did not know precisely; it was open-ended: and then her brow slaughtered all obstacles to that infinity, she was ruthless; one thing she did know was that she could not afford not to be.

"The Grating's gone, Trish, it's not possible to ask where it went." "But. . ." she said, shaking her head at herself and at him and at the nature of things. "I understand and I know," said Bartholomew, "but it's not possible to answer. Think of it, Trish. Think of it as delight," he said, trying to comfort her, but meaning it in full. "Delight?" she asked, stunned, but not necessarily unreceptive if she were to get a proper answer; like a scientist or a mathematician, just wanting to know the true nature of the thing. "Just that. It's all delight," said Bartholomew. "Don't you see, everything is sufficient, and that's the delight." Bartholomew paused, as Trish tried to comprehend, or at least to understand, to combine, deconstruct, and re-combine and resolve, at least in part. Then Bartholomew decided to say nothing, and they walked. They walked away, and went on their way home. She had some partials now, but she had been wise enough to let them go and enjoy the walk with this man. "This man 'Bartholomew'," she thought.

Three

WAKING AND SLEEPING

She woke up in the morning in Bartholomew's arms, they were coiled together like spiders. She ached between her legs and held herself there, trying not to wake him; holding hard, she whispered, "ouch." She knew it had not been his fault; he had been big, but she had not given up pieces of her skin in coitus for a long time.

Bartholomew woke up, moving his head sideways beneath her right breast; she removed her arm from below and smiled down at him as he moved his head up from the pillow and dragged it across her breast as she swelled from the touch and took his arm up off from her back and placed it lower on her body letting it lie there over the curvy valley of her buttocks. "You smell," he said, Trish held back from answering, and said nothing, she put the hand that had comforted her pain to her nose she could smell it she said nothing "Did you sleep well?" "I think I had dreams," "What do you think you dreamt of?" "I, m-,—" "I don't remember" he put his head back down near to her breast in the couplets of her armpit and the skin of her inner limb his hair dragging across it as she sighed, suddenly: images now and he was in the nearest sight of his goal that of rewriting his father's books of implanting into them the diverse treatises of the man's heart the licorice of his basal words on the histories of what he had written to give now to the pages the mystery and the pedestrian fogs and sunlight of those insights that he his father had obtained in prior time to the needs of the clerisy when in the after-come of that he his father had had no

choice but to certify that he was of them of they who were the clerisy; at that young age in which period he his father had been forced to make radical edits to his original work lest it not only be discarded but lest that he awaken the wrath of the cognoscenti still at that time in that period still nominally bourgeois and liberal but ever on the cusp and his father had not been stupid he was not blind to cusps whilst he sighted this the cusps that could criminalize Donovan Rand his friend and co-author of many of his works whose children had grown up with his father's children meaning Bartholomew and his sisters. Bartholomew spoke 'I sometimes wonder who's doing the thinking' he blurted it in this half-sleep it was like in a seizure a contumacious convulsion coming from his mouth. His eyes opened for a moment he looked deeply into Trish's eyes "I'm h'd out, Trish," he said "those old fields are evil I remember them and now no one will pay because no one can play anymore they're dead." It was the first time he had spoken to her like this it couldn't be defined it but it melted her heart, "my darling," she whispered "my sweet" cupping his head and pressing her lips to his "my dear Barthy rest go back to sleep." Now conscious having heard his name from her lips he let his head fall back on the sheets his lily temples resting there and doing eternity's fragile and fitful sleep.

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"Where am I?" he insisted his eyes like darts hitting every point in the room wide, wide and staring like the jackal his eyes, "Who are you?" "Who *are* you?" he demanded having stopped the movement of his eyes fixing his gaze on her. She stumbled through the blocks of her mind confused scared and afraid, "I'm Trish, don't you remember?" Bartholomew went quiet and looked down seemingly at the bed but really into nowhere. "I see," he said. "It's like that," he said, to her, for her, she still said nothing she was still almost petrified. "Of course I know who you are," he said trying to mellow his voice yes to comfort this unknown being whom he now knew he had ravished and loved the night before just hours before now knowing it without remembering and being well aware of that. Then he sat up and put his hands on her shoulders, she quivered with a hard loosening of herself, scared of the hands on her. He moved his thumbs gently into the muscles of her shoulder-blades. Suddenly something happened She let her head and her mass of brown hair fall back into his hands hands that opened for this and received her nape-side her eyes closed mouth open and he touched her neck now and used all of his fingers his whole hands spread out to please her and now as it was to please him, "Trish," he said, "Trish," and she said "darling, just let me say darling to you." He turned her around and held her like a man this time as the early moments of coitus flowered, 'Perhaps it's London in the summer time,' he said to himself just before he lost himself moments after she had already done the same. (A carnival of evil and dedication. One man-ghost above earth stringing a bubble around him, half-dead lying in the ward like Adam. The fat obsequious warden walked in: "Get Up!" he says. He keeps his eyes closed; he is in reflective angry militant meditation. She sighs *London, London, London. The Ground*, she sighs. The Ground. 'Please press your fingers into my body; I'm liquid, Barthy, it will be painless then.' He was amazed at how much he could trust her that she knew that she knew everything. 'I'd love half-

dead for you, darling,' she sighed, moving her neck and head up to his pulling his neck and head down to hers. 'I'd love dead for you darling.' 'Don't say that, don't say that Trish.' 'But I would,' 'I know, but don't say it, my darling, don't say it, please don't say it.' 'I'll never say it again,' Trish said as she kissed his mouth and he kissed her back.)

He awoke in the morning. She was in his arms. She cuddled up to him in her sleep. The sun came in through the window. He lifted her head gently so that she lay on the pillow as he got up off the bed. He stood and slipped into a pair of sandals. He walked through the hallway to the door and then down the stairs to the door to the street. He stepped outside and walked down the steps. No one was out yet, even though it was a big city. He looked around, turning his head. Then he turned it the other way very slowly, facing the truth with his eyes: the light was upon him, a form that dwarfed the meaning of the city that he stood in. It faded. He darted his head immediately to look over across the street. The light came up again and forced Ruminoid out of his hiding place behind the trash cans on the other side of the street. Bartholomew had already turned to walk back up the stairs. As he pushed his hand slowly towards the door knob he heard a scream: "Run Bartholomew!" Bartholomew turned and saw a pair of eyes dying in a whirlwind of ash. Bartholomew looked up at the light that towered over the eyes. He ignored it like it was a dog and opened the door slowly and walked in. The Light flew at the door. Bartholomew could hear a terrible screech. He did not turn but walked up the stairs and slipped quietly back to bed with Trish. He was happy. He lay back with his head on the pillow with his hands behind his head. He smiled and looked at the beautiful wooden musty ceiling. Trish crawled up onto him and rested her sleepy head on his chest. He was very happy. Really.

Four CEDARS OF LEBANON

Here's to turning a new leaf over. The science of sciences, the art of arts. The cedars of Lebanon are badly scuffed and charred but still alive. I existed long before democracy but I am still alive. Didn't Adam? I hear a resounding "Yes." There were long moonshot days shot even more by the sun as the day increased. The dawns were rare. You can imagine then how I longed for quantal significance. Just a bare chest on which to write the presumed days without scuffing the skin or damaging the heterogeneous hair follicles that had been allowed to scam the bosoms and tummies of men and women (more crock-splice than planar ample) since seaweeds scammed the sea while Triton dropped conches to quiet them.

Those were un-crowded times. The inlets to the Nile were great and advantageous deltas. River birds lived in the reeds nesting there with their cocky-rung young, unlikely prey for the alligators who fed on antelope and

large game, energy-lading the 'gators for weeks at a time; and generally safe from the swimming black mamba that prissy-and-cat-like prefers the trees, and the hornet viper that lives out in the desert where there may be some irrigation lets but not enough to coax intelligent river birds.

It's clear isn't it that the chests of letters in the huts and the dugouts did not need sustenance from empiria? Mamba, Bird, Viper, 'Gator, everyone, had already been used to everything for ages. The grist for the mill was the given *the given the given the given*. All that was left was everything: that you'd one day finish the race untaxed and with that with a groined hurl you'd throw your known days into the air at the sky and that would be a victory, the victory of victories. For once, the banishment of dismal thoughts as certain the next day as death the next year, and the sun forever. Lithic, young preponderance in the terra falling into the sea and breaking on the showered-ebb-and-flow of the turning dust-shine-sand and audibly rolling pebbles and the larger lichen and mollusked rocks. You see how happy I must have been. I did not want to be paired with a ringing silo. I wanted to stand alone with the others in the even constancy of quiet daily grists and unheard but present cycles, alone with the others: the reptiles, the birds, the waters, the sands, the mud, the reeds, the mollusks, the lichen, the rocks, the pebbles, the dry-nose smell of the desert coming in to me with the winds.

Today, if I write a book, our historical method of whatever family and full-stop. Life gutted by the unplugged diarrhea of empiria from a hundred million advocating assholes. Making of the staggering eternally forked and brightly dusted light an arcane misery, it is the saddest thing, it is a crime: abetted because of legality by the preponderance of dismal thoughts. My choice is to become Ibsenesque, to see the girl die under *the* black-marked wings of the caged swan. I cannot get closer to the voices. They are the *only* black-marked wings of any sort of bird to have been caged by a tragedian in recorded history. So I must be Ibsenesque, to create a race that close to the voices. A literary race, but none the less, none the less, I tell you. Spurned, carping, fishing at night and scowling at the day-men in their winged capes. Gorging on fish. Saying God Aorta Mine, God-Vein, not all in vain, 'let us gather wing to the night air' and they are serious, even if they are fools. Which they are. But they have friends who are not fools and who are equally serious. They are not the fools' demons. In the mirror of the Anthropos they are identical: dead-ringer blinkered horses of the apocalypse both of them. They are less sly but more cunning. They are better at chess. They are rooted. They have centre and do not live in a moral void. They do not fart at each other and howl with laughter. But they are serious, as serious as bagged-sickles fucking the air, as bicycles fucking the air and fucking it with discipline. They are not spurned because they do not shout from their curtained rooms in the daytime, scaring the day-men as their soul-brothers do. They do not carp and sulk as their soul-brothers do. They have their own spiritual adumbrations but they do not say God Aorta Mine, God-Vein, not all in vain, and so forth. They ride their bicycles, while their soul-brothers drive and enjoy shitting pollution in the faces of the day-men, for which reason they drive the shittiest cars in the busiest areas at night, disturbing celebrities at their red-carpet galas and blowing approaching whores in the dust, bearing their smiling teeth at children like faggots on a honeymoon. Hooligans, all in all. But they

respected their cousins, their reasonable brothers-of-the-night, they worshipped their intellects without jealousy, they were grateful and adoring. They received tolerance and forgiveness in return but with no strings attached. The author cannot think of anything sweeter. Not of something to write, but of something that *is*. The relationship was sweet. It was the ambition behind it that made it disciplined though, and, when brought to levels of greater consciousness by certain acts or deeds or communions or causal get-togethers between the two groups of soul-brothers, even the fools became wise. Their capacities were enormous. It is always like that with hooligans. They have enormous potential. As long as a fool remains a hooligan he is not beaten. And such fools were these so far. Their cooler brothers of the night often stood in quiet reverence of this. The fools would yell together on their reserved big couch in the household of the cool brothers, "God Aorta Mine! God-Vein, Not all in Vain! Let Us Gather Wing to the Night Air!" The cooler brothers, dispersed around the large and comfortable and low-lit and high-windowed room, listened with smiles, and said often, so as to join the ritual, "Yes, let's do it!" Then they would all shake hands and wish each other goodnight, the hooligans transformed into serious and thinking men, which is the very rare way that fools have access to and are able see enough to grab hold of, but then when they do, they are never beaten again, even when they return to their rightful naughty and boisterous selves. And the cool brothers were transformed also, they all glowed with a discernable light, almost like light bulbs.

And so it was in the beginning. Before. Before Bartholomew had moved to the island to live with the old wooden doors at the lighthouse. The old colonial style wood and crannied salt window panes. Whole days there. Scaling down the dangerous cliffs to the sea. Then diving to die in the waters to climb back out of the crashing waves to be reborn for the day, the foam pouring into his mouth as he was pushed across the rocks with his body flailing across the corral so that he would bleed and for once bring the scent to the sea to the sea where it belonged where it could give life. Life to Piers, to Evan, to Jude, to the Colonel, to the mother of the steppes, to his Mama, to his Papa, to Trish, o but to Trish! To all of his Lambs. Whom he had shepparded while they had lived: he had never stopped blowing his conches down at them in their own sea on planet earth, to cool their burning minds and re-salvage each day the wreckage of their pure souls.

Now the places had changed. Only with his return they were long gone. 'I'm going down I'm going down like a monkey.' 'I'm going down I'm going down like a monkey.' 'I'm going down I'm going down like a monkey.' 'I'm going down I'm going down like a monkey.' Then he would get up and scale the cliffs and enter the hazardous waves and let his flesh be torn and his skull beaten and beaten and beaten. Then he'd again crawl back to his stone hut and lie on the tiles as the air cooled into the night and hope that the cockroaches would crawl into his nose and the seagulls rive at his body rive at his body let him just jss jst. 'I'm going down I'm going down like a monkey.' 'I'm going down I'm going down like a monkey.' 'I'm going down I'm going down like a monkey.' 'I'm going down I'm going down like a monkey.' Then again. And crawl back and lie on the tiles through the day and hope that the sun would char his body then high

winds come and break up the charred shape and scatter the black ash. And that the moon would open its clownish smiling mouth and suck the dust in and then use all its solar powers and blow it back out into the resins of the sea. Then he might be finished. Finished as far as a man can be finished. That should be enough for it, shouldn't it? And *if not*, then *what!* *Need he invoke Mars!* How many times did Lazarus die? Two. Two times. 'Enuf wasn't it? It was immaterial and he knew it. He was tied to the earth for this lifetime. He was doomed to make foot to the varnished sleek ruddy brown doors and windows of the lighthouse and stare through the paned glass wooden garments beautifully squared by colonial crannies and mixtures of sea and air and wind. His hair blew, and he held it back and looked at the ground. Then he put his head up, then lifted it up and looked at the sun. His eyes crinkled. He looked to the side of the sky where the sky animals come to meet. Then he just stood and stared out straight into the infinite horizontal blur of the sea. The sea was getting wasted that day, sea-acid hits, so it pulled its fucking ocean-arms up out of its old bowels and decapitated Triton and slammed sudden killer tsunamis that rained down on Bartholomew's wrinkling skin. His body seethed with ageing. He felt his face being torn apart: the man-ancient crinkles around his eyes turned black and his eyes froze to lime. *Why was this happening? Why was this happening again?* He stretched his arms out turning white, and said: "Damn You! May God Damn You!" Maggots burrowed violently into his forehead. While the evil god slaked the blood that poured out of his nose—he, Bartholomew, Bartholomew, he slunk to the Ground. Ground! *The Ground. The Ground*, Trish sighed again. *Again? Was she still around, he thought? Which lifetime was it?* Too late. *Barthy, The Ground! Leave it! Trish! Barthy, What has it ever done for you! You owe it nothing! Please Darling!* Ruminoid begged Cosmo to grant him mortality so that he could kill himself—he- could- not watch any more. But the light grabbed the wind with a hand and picked Bartholomew up and threw him down the cliff onto the wave-ravaged rocks with the very speed of its substance. His dead body was hurled from rock to rock. Fish scuttled after him in large schools and fought over the pieces of his flesh. Ruminoid was fried, his eyes died off last — shining in the dark rising rune as he crumbled to ash.

But a man is not meant to finish like that! Damn! Fuck-Damn! I just wanted to place this one call to him without killing him again. . . operator. (It was just this one call that I wanted, you understand. I could have told him that I've learned to take it well. He would have been protected by it. He'd still be alive. He'd never have to be resurrected again. Sweet succor to him, didn't you all know that? What is it with you anyway? Why are you so afraid of him? Be Afraid. Be Very Afraid Then. It's been your choice. You're marked like skin now.)

Stormbringer, marathon runner, you've got my heart. Run, run, 'till Eugene Onegin falls in love with your ancient demos. The lags were not only planned, they were the gifted mill-constants of your hard-legged final push to each amulet and bloodstone to out-case the laurel gentile schadenfreude. If this were not enough it would be hard. But it is enough. It is the thread. It's the immigrant loved for a moment. It's this. All of it. Stormbringer. Stormbringer.

